



STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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TOM LUNA
STATE SUPERINTENDENT
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Summary of Research for Students Come First

1:1 Mobile Computing Device

Research shows mobile computing devices in the classroom can help raise student achievement. These states and large school districts have seen great success in giving students laptops, or other devices, to use in the classroom. In Maine, research has shown the state's 1:1 laptop program has helped to advance students' writing scores (1), challenge and engage students in science class (2), and improve students' problem-solving skills (3). A study of the Texas Technology Immersion pilot program (4) found that students made gains in achievement on math assessments and became more technologically proficient by using laptops in the classroom, especially low-income students in comparison to their peers. Students who used the laptops also had fewer disciplinary problems throughout the pilot program than their counterparts.

Research:

- 1) Silvernail, David L. and Aaron K. Gritter. *Maine's Middle School Laptop Program: Creating Better Writers*. University of Southern Maine, October 2007. <http://usm.maine.edu/cepare/mlti.htm>.
- 2) Berry, Alexis M. and Sarah E. Wintle. *Using Laptops to Facilitate Middle School Science Learning: the Results of Hard Fun*. University of Southern Maine, February 2009. <http://usm.maine.edu/cepare/mlti.htm>.
- 3) Silvernail, David. *Does Maine's Middle School Laptop Program Improve Learning? A Review of Evidence to Date*. University of Southern Maine, July 2005. <http://usm.maine.edu/cepare/mlti.htm>.
- 4) Shapley, Kelly, et al. *Evaluation of the Texas Technology Immersion Pilot: Final Outcomes for a Four-Year Study*. Texas Center for Educational Research, January 2009. <http://www.tcer.org/research/etxtip/index.aspx>

Online Learning Initiative

Our students are comfortable using technology to get information. Eighty-seven percent of all youth between the ages of 12 and 17 use the Internet (1). Idaho must ensure Idaho students are prepared to learn and work in an online environment. The vast majority of our colleges and universities today require students to take online courses. Workplaces across the U.S. are asking employees to utilize virtual meeting spaces and webinars to conduct business. Online learning is nothing new in the United States or right here in Idaho. Online and distance learning has been proven to be just as effective as traditional education when it comes to raising student achievement (2). Idaho actually has been a pioneer and national leaders in delivering online courses. [Idaho Digital Learning Academy](#) was established in 2002. Today, more than 2 million students in public schools across the country, and nearly 15,000 students in Idaho, are taking online courses. This number will only grow in the coming years. In the next six years, about 10 percent of all courses are estimated to be computer-based for grades K-12. By 2019, about 50 percent of courses will be delivered online (3). States such as Michigan, Alabama, and New Jersey have already started requiring students to take online learning before graduating.

Research:

- 1) Pew Internet Project. *The Internet at School*, <http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2005/The-Internet-at-School.aspx>
- 2) Smith, Rosina, Tom Clark, and Robert Blomeyer. *A Synthesis of New Research on K-12 Online Learning*, November 2005, North Central Regional Educational Laboratory.
- 3) Christensen, Clayton and Michael B. Horn. "How Do We Transform Our Schools?," *Education Next*, Summer 2008.



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Pay-for-Performance

In addition to increasing the base salaries for teachers, the state will implement a pay-for-performance plan to recognize and reward our excellent teachers and administrators. The goal of the pay-for-performance plan is not to force our current educators to work harder; we already know they work hard for students every day. The goal is to reward them for the work they already do. The pay-for-performance plan was agreed to by all stakeholders in 2009, including the school boards, school administrators, the business community, and the Idaho Education Association. This pay-for-performance plan includes three ways to recognize and reward Idaho teachers and administrators:

- **Hard-to-fill positions:** Teachers can receive bonuses for working in hard-to-fill positions, as determined at the local level.
- **Leadership duties:** They can receive bonuses for taking on leadership responsibilities, such as mentoring new teachers or developing curriculum. These are things many teachers already do, but do not get paid for.
- **Student growth:** Teachers and administrators will also receive bonuses for working in schools that meet student growth targets set at both the state and local levels.

Pay-for-performance plans have been implemented successfully in schools across the country. While the research on pay-for-performance has varied from state to state and district to district, depending on the plan and how it was implemented, several studies have shown pay-for-performance can have a positive impact on raising student achievement¹ and on retaining great teachers in the classroom². Idaho teachers and administrators deserve these same opportunities. Working with stakeholders, Idaho developed its own pay-for-performance to best meet the needs of Idaho students.

Research:

- 1) Barnett, Joshua H., Gary W. Ritter, Marcus A. Winters, and Jay P. Greene. *Evaluation of Year One of the Achievement Challenge Pilot Project in the Little Rock Public School District*. Department of Education Reform, University of Arkansas, January 2007.
- 2) Springer, Matthew G. *The Impact of Performance Pay on Teacher Turnover: Findings from Year Two of the TEEG Program*. National Center on Performance Incentives, Peabody College of Vanderbilt University. October 2009

Phasing Out Tenure

The goal of Students Come First is to educate more students at a higher level with limited resources. We all know we can develop ways to educate more students with limited resources. The key is we must educate them at a higher level, too. That is why the Students Come First plan invests so heavily in great teachers and leaders. We must ensure a highly effective teacher and leader is in every classroom and school.

First, all new teachers and administrators entering Idaho's public school system will be offered a two-year rolling contract after a three-year probationary period. Currently, if a teacher has been teaching for longer than three years, they receive a continuing contract in the State of Idaho, a contract that is equivalent to tenure. The continuing contract, or tenure, makes it extremely difficult to nearly impossible to fire a poor-performing teacher. If we are going to create a public education system that is focused on the student, we can no longer permit a forever contract in our schools. Research shows that tenure does not improve student achievement (1).

¹ Barnett, Joshua H., Gary W. Ritter, Marcus A. Winters, and Jay P. Greene. *Evaluation of Year One of the Achievement Challenge Pilot Project in the Little Rock Public School District*. Department of Education Reform, University of Arkansas, January 2007.

² Springer, Matthew G. *The Impact of Performance Pay on Teacher Turnover: Findings from Year Two of the TEEG Program*. National Center on Performance Incentives, Peabody College of Vanderbilt University. October 2009



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The new two-year contract will only be effective for new teachers. The Students Come First plan includes a grandfather clause so those teachers who already have tenure will keep it. The new contract will still offer certain protections for Idaho's new teachers. Every teacher will have the right to work under a contract of up to two years. At the end of the first year, the local school district will have the right to add another year, allowing teachers to continuously work under a contract. This is not a new idea or something just happening in Idaho. Under the new contract system, the district will be required to give the teacher a reason, in writing, for not renewing the contract. At that time, the teacher will have the right to an informal hearing with the local school board of trustees to appeal. Idaho is not alone in this effort. States across the country are working on laws to eliminate, phase out or reform tenure. Colorado, Delaware and Rhode Island have already approved legislation that will tie a teacher's tenure to performance. These states recognize that tenure may have been a rite of passage in the past, but it now serves as an obstacle to improving schools. One study even shows that while many teachers still like tenure, even they recognize it has flaws (2). Wyoming, Montana, and Illinois also have introduced legislation to eliminate tenure or phase out tenure.

Research:

- 1) McGuinn, Patrick. "Ringing the Bell for K-12 Teacher Tenure Reform." The Center for American Progress. February 2010. http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2010/02/pdf/techartenure_exec_sum.pdf
- 2) Farkas, Steve, Jean Johnson, and Ann Duffet. "Stand by Me: What Teachers Really Think about Unions, Merit Pay and Other Professional Matters." Public Agenda, 2003

Eliminating Seniority as a Criterion in RIF

The state of Idaho will eliminate seniority as a criterion for Reduction in Force (RIF). No longer will the state allow longevity to determine who should be teaching in our student's classrooms. Research does not support the use of seniority as a criterion; in fact, research has shown that seniority has no correlation with effectiveness in the classroom (1). Age and longevity does not define teacher quality. Therefore, if Idaho wants to put students first, it cannot allow seniority to be the criteria in RIFs. Colorado has already eliminated seniority in its RIF policies statewide. Arizona has banned seniority as a basis for rehiring teachers. Other states, including Illinois, New Jersey, and New York, are looking at doing the same thing.

Research:

- 1) Goldhaber, Dan and Roddy Theobald. "Assessing the Determinants and Implications of Teacher Layoffs." Center for Education Data and Research, University of Washington Bothell, July 2010.